



Shot Talk



US Surgeon General Visits SAMHD



The Surgeon General, Dr. David Satcher meets with Director of Health Dr. Fernando Guerra, Program Manager Mark Ritter and Clinic Nurse Supervisor Lynn Seeman.

On November 11, 1998 the Surgeon General, Dr. David Satcher visited the San Antonio Metropolitan Health District Immunization Program to review some of the unique programs that are currently under way here in San Antonio. Dr. Satcher met with several immunization personnel including Dr. Don Morse, CDC Bureau Chief, Mark Ritter, Immunization Program Manager, Jacqueline Cardona, CDC Public Health Advisor, Lynn Seeman, Clinic Nurse Supervisor and Terry Boyd, Department Systems Specialist. Dr. Satcher was given a review of the San Antonio Immunization Registry System (SAIRS) and discussed several local efforts by the immunization staff to better improve service delivery and overall immunization rates in Bexar County. Dr. Satcher commended the local efforts of the SAMHD Immunization Team.

ACIP Expands Hepatitis B and Varicella Age Groups

On October 21 and 22, 1998, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) passed four Vaccines for Children (VFC) resolutions and a new Rotavirus VFC resolution. All four of these resolutions took effect on October 21, 1998. The Rotavirus resolution will not be effective until the publication in the MMWR or the ACIP general recommendations for use of Rotavirus vaccine and the establishment of a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) federal vaccine contract with the vaccine manufacturer.

A summary of these changes is as follows:

VARICELLA:

1. Expands the eligible age groups through 18 years of age.

POLIO:

1. Changes the timing of the third dose of IPV from 12-18 months to 6-18 months.
2. Clarifies that the eligible groups are all children 6 weeks through 18 years.

MMR:

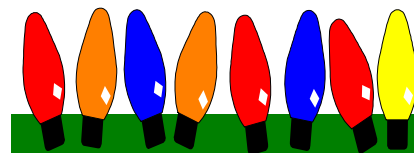
Clarifies the use of MMR vaccine

during outbreaks and states that infants as young as 6 months of age are eligible for MMR vaccine during outbreaks.

INFLUENZA:

1. Clarifies the recommended schedule and dosage intervals; the previous influenza resolutions were missing these sections. Expands the groups eligible to receive influenza vaccine to include: 1) children and adolescents who are residents of nursing homes or other chronic-care facilities that house persons at any age who have chronic medical conditions, 2) adolescent females who will be in the second or third trimester of pregnancy during influenza season, and 3) children and adolescents who are household members of persons in high-risk groups.

These resolutions are published on the VFC homepage (www.cdc.gov/nip/vfc). For more information contact Vivian Flores at 207-2868.



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SAMHD Introduces HCV Testing

Hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection is the most common chronic blood-borne infection in the United States. Studies indicate that an estimated 3.9 million Americans have been infected with HCV, most of these persons are chronically infected and might not be aware of their infection because they are not clinically ill. Infected persons serve as a possible source of infection to others and are at risk for chronic liver disease or other HCV-related chronic diseases during the first two or more decades following initial infection.

Hepatitis-C is transmitted primarily through direct exposures to blood. In the United States, the two most common exposures associated with transmission of HCV are blood transfusion (prior to 1992) and needle sharing during illicit drug use.

Locally it is estimated that between 15,000 to 20,000 residents may be infected, most unknowingly. The Antonio Metropolitan Health District (SAMHD) currently registers about 3-4 deaths per month due to HCV directly and indirectly.

The SAMHD formed a Hepatitis-C Working Group comprised of public and private health professionals from throughout our community. During the course of several meetings this year, a consensus was developed on a number of recommendations that will help address this problem locally. These recommendations provide guidelines for the identification, counseling, testing,

and referral of persons at risk for HCV infection.

The SAMHD will re-direct public health resources to help manage this impending threat and in mid-January begin counseling and testing persons in high-risk groups for exposure to Hepatitis-C. The test will be made available to the public at a low cost. Individuals who test positive for HCV will be offered the hepatitis A & B vaccines, if not immune, to help protect them from further liver injury. These patients will be counseled and have the opportunity to have questions and concerns answered by knowledgeable public health professionals.

HCV testing is recommended for the following groups:

- ⌘ Anyone who has ever injected drugs; even if just once.
- ⌘ Individuals that received a transfusion prior to July 1992.
- ⌘ Hemophiliacs.
- ⌘ Persons who have ever been on hemodialysis.
- ⌘ Spouses of HCV patients.
- ⌘ Sex partners of IV drug users.
- ⌘ People who have received tattoos at home or while in prison.
- ⌘ Persons who have had "homemade" body piercing.
- ⌘ Persons with a history of sexually transmitted diseases.
- ⌘ Persons with multiple sex partners.
- ⌘ Concerned household members of HCV patients.

For more HCV information you can call SAMHD at 207-8830 or access the CDC Hepatitis Website at www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/hepatitis.

Source: HCV Working Group Consensus Statement 12/1/98, SAMHD.

RSV Program in Full Swing

The San Antonio Metropolitan Health District has established a program to prevent severe respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) infections in infants and young children. RSV, respiratory syncytial

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virus, can cause severe lower respiratory tract infections in susceptible infants, and is responsible for about 90,000 hospitalizations and 4,500 deaths per year.

A new medication called Synagis (Palivizumab) has recently been approved to prevent severe RSV infections in certain high-risk infants. This group includes premature infants (less than or equal to 35 weeks of gestation) born after March of 1998, and children under two years of age with chronic lung disease or bronchopulmonary dysplasia requiring oxygen in the past six months. Synagis has been proven to reduce hospitalizations and the number severe infections due to RSV.

In order to receive Synagis through the SAMHD, the child should meet the above criteria and be referred by a physician. For more information about the RSV program, RSV, or Synagis contact the RSV Coordinator, Chris Kennel, at 207-6916.

Flood Victims Get a Much Welcomed Boost

The San Antonio Metropolitan Health District was very busy in late October and early November responding to the needs of those who were affected by the 'flood of 98.' In response to important health concerns regarding communicable diseases, the SAMHD organized an immunization blitz on the affected communities in the San Antonio area.

In conjunction with local public health clinics, a mobile nursing team and five command posts were set-up to meet the immunization needs of those who were at risk for both tetanus and influenza. During the first two weeks of flood relief, the SAMHD administered over 5,800 doses of tetanus and 3,500 doses of influenza. The SAMHD Immunization Program would like to thank all those who assisted with flood relief efforts.



Brenda Lemke presents TDH CASA award to Trinity Medical Group: Pictured- Alice Perez, Rebecca Solis, Sandra Dralle, Ted Estrada, B. Lemke Not Shown: Dr. Mary Helen Perez-Adam, and Dr. David Popp.

VFC Providers Capture Awards

The Texas Department of Health (TDH) hosted the 3rd Annual Immunization Conference on November 3rd-5th in Houston. The conference highlighted cutting edge information about vaccines and vaccine preventable diseases as well as recognizing CASA Assessment Award Winners. The SAMHD would like to congratulate the VFC providers who received a 1998 Immunize Texasize AFIX/CASA Clinic Assessment Award at this year's conference. Providers were recognized by TDH for a 90%+ or an 80-89% rate for 4DTPs, 3 Polios, and 1 MMR for children at 24 months of age. The national and state goal is 90% immunization coverage of 24 month olds by the year 2000.

In addition to CASA awards the SAMHD had a total of five poster presentations accepted for display at Immunize Texasize. Topics of the presentations included: Autodialer Reminder Recall Effectiveness, Use of Hbig, CASA/Registry Comparison, Immunization/WIC Linkage, and Merging New Technology with Existing Immunization Registries.

Hats Off to all VFC CASA Award Winners and SAMHD Poster Presenters!!!

CASA Team Hard at Work

The Vaccines for Children CASA Assessment Team is working hard to contact VFC providers to conduct CASA Assessments. An Assessment provides invaluable information to providers on their immunization practice patterns and immunization rates. To date, 72 CASA assessments have been conducted with VFC Providers. If you are interested in participating in an Assessment please contact Brenda Lemke at 207-2859.

Thank you to the following VFC Providers for their participation in CASA Assessment:

Northside Pediatric Clinic, Dr. Thomas Starr, Stoneoak Pediatric, Quinones Family Medicine, Dr. Guillermo Marcos, Dr. Clay Gruesbeck, Las Palmas Minor Emergency Clinic, Hill's Medical Clinic, Crestway Medical Clinic, Dr. Valerie Ostrower, Family Clinics of San Antonio, Valley Clinic, Somerset Family Clinic, Toepperwein Medical Clinic, Dullnig House, Dr. Frank Bryant, SAMM Overflow Clinic, Laurel Heights Clinic, Healthy Kids, Health Texas Medical Group.

VFC and Medicaid Working Hand in Hand

Children that meet at least one of the following criteria are eligible for VFC vaccine:

- ⌘ **Medicaid Enrolled** - a child who is enrolled in the Medicaid program.
- ⌘ **Uninsured** - a child who has no health insurance coverage.
- ⌘ **American Indian or Alaskan Native** - as defined by the Indian health Services Act.
- ⌘ **Underinsured** - a child whose health insurance benefit plan does not include vaccinations.

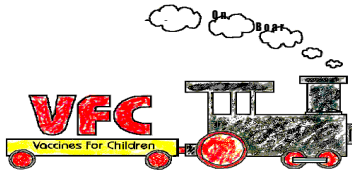
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By far the largest category of children eligible for the VFC Program are Medicaid-enrolled. Some VFC providers have asked, "As a Medicaid provider can't we send our patients to the Health Department for their shots?" According to the 1998 Texas Medicaid Provider Procedures Manual, page 39-4, "Children must be immunized during medical checkups according to TDH routine immunization schedule. **The screening provider is responsible for administration of immunizations and may not refer children to the local health department to receive immunizations**".

The benefits of the VFC program include:

- ⌘ Provides public purchased vaccine, for eligible children, at no charge to public and private providers.
- ⌘ Automatically covers vaccines recommended by the ACIP and approved by the CDC, including new vaccines, new vaccine combinations, and revised guidelines for vaccine use.
- ⌘ Saves parents and VFC providers approximately \$370 per child in out-of-pocket expenses for vaccine.
- ⌘ Saves resources by negotiating federal vaccine contracts at lower prices.
- ⌘ Eliminates vaccine cost as a barrier to immunizing eligible children.
- ⌘ **Reduces the practice of referring children from the private sector to the public sector for vaccination, keeping children in their medical home for comprehensive health care.**

VFC and Medicaid working in concert help eligible children to receive comprehensive medical care by keeping children in their medical home. If you have VFC questions please contact Vivian Flores at 207-2868.



VFC Program Grows

Source: 1998 Texas Medicaid Manual, 1997 CDC/VFC Operations Manual.

The Vaccines for Children Program is pleased to welcome the APAC Family Clinic in Von Ormy.

Welcome Aboard!

Holiday Season = Flu Season

With cold weather and the holiday season upon us, the SAMHD would like to encourage all adults to protect themselves against influenza. Flu season runs from November through March or April and may pose a threat to the holiday plans of thousands of people this winter. During the months of December through February, the SAMHD will continue to provide low cost flu shots at various clinics throughout the city. The cost of receiving a flu shot is \$5.00. Persons with Medicare Part B, Medicaid or CareLink are eligible to receive a flu shot at no cost with proof of coverage. Call 207-8750 for clinic information.

Since the beginning of the influenza immunization season in October, SAMHD has administered approximately 21,000 flu immunizations throughout Bexar County. In addition to SAMHD, H-E-B, University Health System CareLink, and Davila Pharmacy have been serving the San Antonio community by providing flu and other adult immunizations throughout Bexar County.

Winter Warnings from CPS

City Public Service warns customers to avoid the dangers of carbon monoxide poisoning this winter by

having their gas heating system cleaned and inspected now. CPS strongly recommends consumers have heating systems cleaned and inspected by a licensed and bonded heating contractor before cold weather arrives. This will ensure the best performance and the safest, most economical operation possible during the winter.

Last winter, 26 adults and 16 children suffered from carbon monoxide poisoning in Bexar County, according to CPS statistics tallied from the number of cases transported or treated by Emergency Medical Services.

Causes of carbon monoxide poisoning last winter were faulty and dirty gas heating appliances improperly placed filter doors and failure to connect outside vents after replacing the roof, according to CPS.

Carbon monoxide is a by-product of the incomplete combustion of fuel. The tasteless, odorless and colorless gas combines with the blood 200 times faster than oxygen, causing flu-like symptoms. These include severe headaches, dizziness, and nausea, ringing in the ears, abdominal pains, yawning and difficulty in breathing. Prolonged exposure can result in unconsciousness, brain damage and death. Due to the consequences of a wrong diagnosis, CPS sends letters to local emergency rooms and clinics every fall which describe the similarities between carbon monoxide poisoning and the flu.

Vacuuming the heating equipment will keep it clean and problem free. During the heating season, CPS recommends consumers change filters in central heating units at least once a month, but cautions to properly replace the filter door. Space heaters should have a nearby window opened about two inches for complete combustion to occur. The flame in gas heaters should always burn blue. A yellow flame indicates the presence of carbon monoxide.

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For more information about carbon monoxide poisoning or winter safety tips, contact the CPS Public Safety Awareness Section at 978-2970.

Source: City Public Service

SAMHD Immunization Program

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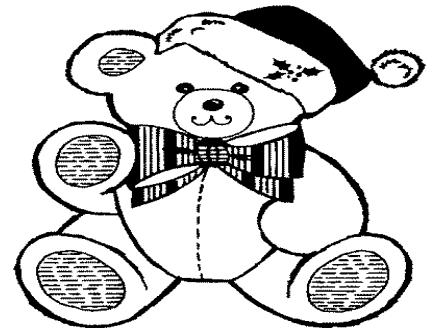
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**Thank you for your
continued support!**

***Happy Holidays From the
VFC Staff to You!***

***City Holidays
December 24 & 25, 1998
January 1, 1999
January 18, 1999
February 15, 1999***